

U.S. Releases New Papers on Kennedy Assassination

■ **Records:** Documents at National Archives offer interesting glimpses of Oswald, FBI. Information doesn't challenge lone-gunner conclusion.

By RONALD BROWNSTEIN
TIMES POLITICAL WRITER

WASHINGTON—It's too soon to say for sure, but conspiracy fatigue may be setting in.

The National Archives prepared for Friday's release of a raft of new government documents relating to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy by assembling enough research guides and security officers to handle a full-scale rush on the stacks. But as the day wore on, the archivists often outnumbered the reporters and researchers who turned up to sift through the records.

Awaiting them were 80 cardboard boxes of declassified FBI records on Lee Harvey Oswald, along with four boxes of desk diaries and telephone records from Robert F. Kennedy's tenure as attorney general and five boxes of records from the mid-1970s Senate Select Committee that studied the intelligence community and its possible links to President Kennedy's assassination.

Researchers won't assimilate all the material for months or years, if ever. National Archives officials who have paged through the documents say there is no stunning new fact that challenges the conclusion that Oswald, acting alone, shot the President on Nov. 22, 1963.

Of course, there also appears to be nothing in the papers to dissuade those who believe Oswald had help, or was the tool of Cubans, the CIA, the Mafia, or some combination of the three.

But the ocean of memos, documents and Teletypes offer tantalizing glimpses of the personality and behavior of Oswald, the FBI at work, the concerns of top government officials in the days after the assassination, and the endless collection of loose ends that have

entangled conspiracy theorists ever since.

Two memos, for instance, underscore the speed with which the FBI and the Justice Department appeared to have concluded that Oswald acted alone.

Only one day after the assassination, then-FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, in his first memo on the case to President Lyndon B. Johnson, appears to have foreclosed the possibility that others assisted Oswald.

In the five-page memo summarizing Oswald's background and the evidence against him, Hoover uses only singular—never plural—terms to describe the "assailant" and "the person responsible for this assassination."

On Nov. 25, 1963, the day after Oswald was killed, Deputy Atty. Gen. Nicholas Katzenbach wrote Bill Moyers, then a top aide to Johnson, urging that the FBI make public "a complete and thorough report" on Oswald as soon as possible to discourage the emergence of conspiracy theories.

"The public must be satisfied that Oswald was the assassin; that he did not have confederates who are still at large; and that the evidence was such that he would have been convicted at trial," Katzenbach wrote.

He added: "Speculation about Oswald's motivation ought to be cut off, and we should have some basis for rebutting thought that this was a Communist conspiracy or [as the Iron Curtain press is saying] a right-wing conspiracy to blame it on the Communists."

In fact, in December, 1963, the FBI turned over to the Justice Department a report, which was leaked to the press, that concluded Oswald acted alone.

But, as the documents released Friday illustrate, conspiracy theories about the murder proliferated anyway.

In one instance, FBI agents days after the murder responded to a memo sent to the bureau by a United States Information Agency official who attempted to implicate China. The agents assigned to review the submitted evidence concluded that the "document con-

tains nothing but speculation. . . . It appears he was interested in getting his theory down on paper as quickly as possible and was attempting to attract some attention to himself."

More serious questions were raised by Petr. S. Derjabin, described in a Nov. 26, 1963, memo as "an admitted former Soviet intelligence officer." Derjabin told the FBI he "does not believe the Soviet government had any knowledge of Oswald's plans to assassinate President Kennedy; however he does believe that Oswald and his wife had some connection with the Russian intelligence service."

Derjabin, the report continued, "feels that Oswald's departure from the Soviet Union was planned by the intelligence service."

Even members of the Communist Party of the United States had their own theories. According to an unnamed FBI informant, top party officials, at a meeting days after the assassination, indicated that they believed "someone else did the shooting but all the evidence was stacked against Oswald to point to him as the guilty person."

The portrait of Oswald that emerges from the papers is at once desolate and poignant. One of the most compelling documents is a psychiatric report ordered on Oswald by a New York City family

Television Interview Shows

Guests scheduled for Sunday's television interview shows:

MEET THE PRESS

NBC, 7 a.m., Channel 4

(VCR Plus No. 67222)

- Defense Secretary William J. Perry; Lt. Gen. Michael Rose, U.N. commander in Bosnia

FACE THE NATION

CBS, 9 a.m., Channel 2

(VCR Plus No. 74777)

- Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.); Dan Stein, executive director of the Federation for American Immigration Reform; Michael Ratner of the Center for Constitutional Rights

THIS WEEK WITH DAVID BRINKLEY

ABC, 10 a.m., Channel 7

(VCR Plus No. 76796)

- Robert E. Rubin, assistant to the President for economic policy; Kenneth Lipper, investment banker and chairman of Lipper & Co.; Irwin Kellner, chief economist for Chemical Bank

LATE EDITION

CNN, 2 p.m.

(VCR Plus No. 870628)

- Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich

court judge in 1953 after Oswald was brought in for excessive truancy. The psychiatrist describes Oswald, then 13, as "seriously detached; withdrawn . . . laconic and taciturn."

The report continues: "There is a rather pleasant, appealing quality about [this] emotionally starved, affectionless youngster. Grows as one speaks to him, and it seems fairly clear that he detached himself from the world around him because no [one] in it ever met any of his needs and love."

But, the psychiatrist added, Oswald "acknowledged fantasies about being powerful and sometimes hurting or killing people but refused to talk about the dreams, other than to admit that they sometimes contained violence."

Another memo suggests that Oswald had changed little along the tangled course that led him to the assassination in Dallas. A few days after the murder, a woman who described herself as a childhood acquaintance of Oswald recounted to the FBI a conversation she had with him and his Russian wife, Marina, in New Orleans in July, 1963.

The woman asked Oswald's wife how she liked the United States. "Me like America," Marina Oswald responded, according to the memo. "Lee no like Russia. Lee no like America. Lee like moon."